



# GROUND COVER

NEWS AND SOLUTIONS FROM THE GROUND UP

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# Inequality – pushed to the brink by the vicious cycle



by Susan Beckett  
Publisher

Something is afoot. The main floor of the Michigan Theater was full for a showing of the Robert Reich-narrated documentary *Inequality for All* on October 8, and most people stayed for the panel discussion following the show. Perhaps Reich's appearance on *The Daily Show* and the many Facebook posts surrounding the event created sufficient buzz, or maybe the government shutdown and looming debt ceiling crisis penetrated the usual complacency.

The staggering disparity between rich and poor in this country contributes to the government dysfunction and our communities' disrepair, and after 30

years, we have reached a crisis stage that many are no longer willing to ignore. Our roads, bridges, sewers and schools are crumbling while our politicians joust for their supporters' acclaim, imperiling our national credit rating in the process.

Reich, a noted economist who served as Labor Secretary in the Clinton administration and narrated the movie, displayed graphs correlating gross wage disparity with economic collapse. The two peaks of disparity in the last century occurred in 1928 and 2007. The current gap between salaries of the rich and poor leaves the United States at 64<sup>th</sup> in the world in terms of balanced income distribution, far behind every other developed nation, with much of the loss coming from the middle class.

There is a popular belief that the economic decline of the working class is attributable to the displacement of workers by robots and by workers in foreign countries who will work for less. According to Reich in a September 3 op-ed for the *New York Times*, "The real reason for America's Great Regression was political. As income and wealth became more concentrated in fewer hands, American politics reverted to what Marriner S. Eccles, a former chairman of the Federal Reserve, described in the 1920s [as], 'when people with great economic power had an undue influence in making the rules of the economic game.'"

We could have responded to the changing conditions with protection for workers, as the strongest European economies did. Instead, since the late 1970s, government stood by while our country's biggest companies went global. They now have little allegiance to our country, and many pay few or no taxes here, but their top earners and lobbyists wield large influence on our elected officials.

"Most telling of all," Reich's op-ed continues, "Washington deregulated

Wall Street while insuring it against major losses. In so doing, it allowed finance – which, until then, had been the servant of American industry – to become its master, demanding short-term profits over long-term growth and raking in an ever-larger portion of the nation's profits. By 2007, financial companies accounted for over 40 percent of American corporate profits and almost as great a percentage of pay, up from 10 percent during the Great Prosperity," Reich said.

The demand in the 1980s for a reduction in taxes was a desperate attempt to stay afloat in the face of inflation as salaries stagnated. Riding the anti-taxation wave, the rich were able to reduce their income tax from over 70 percent to 35 percent and claim most of their incomes as capital gains, taxed at only 15 percent. And they eviscerated inheritance taxes, so little of their accumulated wealth made it back to the government coffers. Tax revenue now makes up only 15 percent of the economy – the lowest percentage in 16 years – and is insufficient to cover expenses, leaving us with a budget deficit that adds to the national debt.

Meanwhile, payroll and sales taxes have increased, taking a relatively larger chunk out of modest paychecks, and decreasing the spending power of the middle class. Most remaining middle class families have two wage-earners working multiple jobs and longer hours to attain the same standard of living provided by a single worker in the 1970s, and their credit is maxed out. They are out of options for maintaining their lifestyle.

Workers have been fighting with each other over the remaining scraps, rather than working together to obtain better wages for all. Fewer than 8 percent of private sector workers now belong to unions. In the 1950s, one-third of workers were unionized. Productivity increased by 75 percent from 1979 to 2012, while median salaries increased only five percent.

Consumer spending accounts for 70 percent of our economic activity, so **middle class consumers are the real job creators**, according to Reich. The rich spend too little and save most of their income. After all, one person can only eat so much, live in so many houses and drive so many cars, no matter how luxurious they are. A large and prosperous middle class stabilizes and energizes the economy.

Median incomes fell between 1978 and 2010. By comparison, from 1933 to 1977, the United States was a paragon of upward mobility, growing a robust middle class. The resulting "virtuous circle" of consumer spending, increased tax revenue, higher living standards, government investment in infrastructure, and so on, coincided with a growing economy and broadly-shared prosperity.

We are now caught in a "vicious circle" of lower wages, reduced consumer spending, decreasing tax revenues, decreased government investment in education and infrastructure and higher unemployment.

It is not too late to reverse our course. In a national referendum in Switzerland, two-thirds of the population voted to allow shareholders to slash their executives' compensation and banned "golden parachutes" for outgoing executives. Overpaying a CEO is now punishable by up to three years in jail or a fine of six years' salary. This in Switzerland – the banking haven of the world, with the highest per capita GDP of any major economy.

OCCUPY Wall Street and the Tea Party were harbingers. The slumbering giant is awakening, and to paraphrase a quote from the 1976 film *Network*, "We're mad as hell, and we're not going to take it anymore!"

## VOC program coming

Shalom Community Church and others are sponsoring community forum on November 11 in an effort to start a Victim-Offender Conferencing (VOC) program in Washtenaw County. VOC complements some of the restorative justice practices already in use at the Juvenile Court and could work with adults, too. The guest speaker will be Fred Van Liew, an ex-prosecuting attorney who, after nearly 20 years of prosecuting offenders as Bureau Chief with the Polk County [Iowa] Attorney's Office, realized that "we can do much better when it comes to how we respond to crime and those who commit them."

## GROUNDCOVER MISSION:

*Groundcover News exists to create opportunity and a voice for low-income people while taking action to end homelessness and poverty.*

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# JOIN HERE IT'S GOOD FOR THE HEART



At the Y, we exist to strengthen community. Together with people like you, we nurture the potential of kids, help people improve their health, and provide opportunities to support our neighbors. So join our cause. And create meaningful change not just for your family, but also for your community.



## Stories to befriend and strengthen life



by Rev. Dr.  
**Martha Brunell**  
Groundcover  
Contributor

On October 6, 2013, people in communities where Groundcover News is sold participated in the annual Washtenaw/Ann Arbor CROP Hunger Walk. Two weeks later, communities in northern DeKalb County, Illinois, where I now live, provided walkers for the Sondra King Memorial CROP Hunger Walk. These walks, with walkers of all ages, were among 1,600 2013 CROP Walks across the nation. CROP walks are a hunger education and fundraising project of Church World Service (CWS). CWS is a cooperative effort of 37 Christian communions who work with a variety of partners addressing hunger, poverty, peace, and justice around the globe. The CROP walks are just one example of CWS's worldwide, ecumenical, interfaith, multi-cultural presence.

The first CROP Walk was held in Bismarck, North Dakota in October 1969. Recently, I heard about important CROP history preceding that first walk. It is history embedded in the story of my current church – Mayfield Congregational UCC in rural Sycamore, Illinois. I was meeting with our stewardship chair. She, like me, came to northern Illinois from elsewhere in the country. In our conversation the CROP Walk came up, and she mentioned Mayfield's deep CROP involvement. I knew that Team Mayfield always raised a substantial amount of money considering the size of the congregation. I would learn that day that there is much more to the Mayfield/CROP story.

In the beginning, CROP was an acronym for the Christian Rural Overseas Program. Starting in 1947, Midwestern farm families sent some

of their grain to relieve the hunger of European and Asian neighbors in the wake of World War II. Those initial shipments were delivered 22 years prior to the first walk. Farm families at Mayfield were among those whose fields supplied CROP grain. My heart warmed when I received this story. Although I was well aware of Mayfield's founding in 1860 as a piece of the Underground Railroad network and of its tendency toward progressive positions since then, I didn't know their CROP story. The following Sunday I asked if they were holding onto any other good stories I could treasure.

Rachel Naomi Remen, a remarkable physician, presenter, and author, has written of the healing power of stories. That power, she says, lies in how we can "befriend and strengthen the life in one another and change the world, one heart at a time." I experienced that befriending and strengthening of life when I was told the Mayfield/CROP story, and I experience it too in my Groundcover connection.

The stories that fill issue after issue of Groundcover News extend us toward one another with capacities to befriend and strengthen life. Stories are a gift we pass back and forth. Reminding us of our common human struggles and triumphs, they fortify our intentions. They bring us to laughter and awe. In stories we often find the motivation to take the next right step, however easy or difficult it is. The larger effort of CROP or Groundcover News is composed of one very local story after another. When we probe those stories, dare to tell and unleash them, we are approaching each other at the heart level where we and the world might change. I urge that we keep the stories coming. On the pages of the paper and beyond, we can commit to provide a listening space for our mutual befriending and strengthening. Always the story in me greets and looks forward to the story in you.

## November Calendar of Events

**November 2 – 3<sup>rd</sup> Biennial Peace All-Stars Concert**, 6-10 p.m. Interfaith Council for Peace & Justice hosts the event featuring musicians and storytelling centering around inspiring and promoting the cause of peace. Tickets \$15 in advance, \$20 at the door. Ann Arbor Vineyard Church, 2275 Platt Rd., Ann Arbor. Tickets and more info: [www.icpj.net/2013/peace-all-stars](http://www.icpj.net/2013/peace-all-stars), or contact Grace Kotre at [gracek@icpj.net](mailto:gracek@icpj.net) or (734) 663-1870.

**November 3 – Reclaiming our Democracy RESULTS Benefit**, 1:30-4 p.m. Founder of RESULTS and author of *Reclaiming Our Democracy – Healing the Break Between People and Government*, Sam Daley-Harris, will discuss his model for effective political action. Free; donations encouraged. First Baptist Church of Ann Arbor, 517 E. Washington, Ann Arbor. More info: (734) 930-1772, [RESULTSMich@gmail.com](mailto:RESULTSMich@gmail.com).

**November 4 – Lecture: "After George Zimmerman – Moving Our Criminal Justice System Off 'Autopilot'"** 12-1 p.m. In response to the Trayvon Martin case, presenter Glenn Martin – Director of the Center for Public Policy at The Fortune Society – invites us to ask hard questions like, *Does our justice system truly safeguard the rule of law?* Free and open to the public. Space limited; RSVP in advance. More info and registration: [ssw.umich.edu](http://ssw.umich.edu).

**November 4 – Lecture: "Making a Profound Difference on Global Poverty and Climate Change,"** 4-5:30 p.m. Author and organizer Sam Daley-Harris will discuss making a difference, drawing from his experiences organizing the Microcredit Summit, founding and growing RESULTS, and consulting with the Citizens Climate Lobby. Free and open to the public. U-M Ross Business School, Room 0230, 701 Tappan, Ann Arbor. More info: (734) 615-6663.

**November 8 – Growing Hope Monthly Community Potluck and Sustainability Film Series**, 6-9 p.m. All are invited (including kids) to share in a meal and discussion with friends and neighbors. Film screening of 2011 documentary *The Greenest Building* immediately following potluck (roughly 7 p.m.). Please bring a dish to pass, and RSVP. Ypsilanti Public Library Downtown Branch, 922 West Michigan Ave., Ypsilanti. More info: [erin@growinghope.net](mailto:erin@growinghope.net), (734) 786-8401.

**November 11 – Lecture: Winona LaDuke: "Building a Green Economy: Indigenous Strategies for a Sustainable Future,"** 6-8 p.m.

Internationally acclaimed Native American author, orator, and activist Winona LaDuke presents a case for leveraging Native American communities to stimulate sustainable energy solutions for the United States. Free and open to the public; reception to follow. U-M Rackham Graduate School, 915 E. Washington St., Ann Arbor. More info: [www.cew.umich.edu](http://www.cew.umich.edu).

**November 11 – Lecture: "Restorative Justice: Healing for Victims, Offenders and Communities,"** 6:30-8 p.m. Fred Van Liew, a former prosecutor from Iowa who is now a full-time advocate for restorative justice practices, will discuss restorative justice, focusing on Victim-Offender Conferencing, and enlist others to help make this a possibility here in Washtenaw County. Free and open to the public. First Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Ann Arbor, 4001 Ann Arbor - Saline Rd., Ann Arbor. More info: email [voc4change@gmail.com](mailto:voc4change@gmail.com).

**November 13 – "Groundcover Groove,"** 8 p.m. Funk-jazz dance music from Hulabaloo and FUBAR to benefit Groundcover News. \$10 cover at the door or through PayPal at [groundcovernews.org](http://groundcovernews.org). Live, 102 S. 1st St., Ann Arbor. More info: [greg@groundcovernews.com](mailto:greg@groundcovernews.com) or (734) 907-9210.

**November 22 – 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual "Ladies' Night" Food Gatherers Fundraising Event**, 6-9 p.m. Free event with music, shopping and pampering. \$5 suggested donation per person will go to Food Gatherers. 155 N. Maple Rd., Ann Arbor. More info: [www.englishgardens.com](http://www.englishgardens.com).

**November 27/28 – Thanksgiving Dinner. Free dinners provided to the less fortunate at the following locations and times:**

- **Cottage Inn:** 11/28, 11 a.m. - 2 p.m. 512 E. William, Ann Arbor. More info: (734) 663-3379.
- **Vineyard Church:** 11/28, time TBA. 2275 Platt Rd, Ann Arbor. More info: email Lisa Aunins, [launins@med.umich.edu](mailto:launins@med.umich.edu).
- **Bethesda Bible Church:** 11/27, 6-7:30 p.m. 1800 S. Huron, Ypsilanti. Spaced limited; sign up in advance at your local shelter; transportation from local shelters offered. More info: (734) 483-7279.

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## Camp Take Notice – where are the evicted campers now?

by Susan Beckett

When they were evicted at the end of June 2012, 33 of the 68 campers living at Camp Take Notice (CTN) were offered one-year housing subsidies of up to \$1,000 per month, through the state of Michigan. Some of the others received subsidies from the Veteran's Administration (VA) or permanent local vouchers that happened to become available for people with disabilities. The rest were ineligible for subsidies based on their income or immigration status. Most of the one-year subsidies have now expired, and nearly two-thirds of the former campers are again sleeping outdoors, but without the safety and support of the camp. MISSION, the non-profit that supported and guided CTN, still helps people get sleeping bags and other essentials, and hosts a meeting and meal every Sunday at a board member's house, but there is no communal sleeping area.

Former CTN campers Dory and Scott shared a subsidy that was administered by Michigan Ability Partners (MAP), and moved into their Ypsilanti apartment on July 5. They said it was great while they were there and MAP was great to work with. Dory and Scott continued to attend the Sunday meeting when transportation is provided. Both have medical conditions that keep them from working, but neither has yet been approved for Social Security Insurance (SSI) disability payments. They lamented that there was no plan for campers after the year was up and the subsidies expired.

"I feel like they shortchanged us... they just hid the homeless for a year and now they're back on the street," said Scott. "I should have a CPAP (for sleep apnea treatment) and insulin, but that needs to be refrigerated and my kidneys are being injured from the excess sugar."

Dory was prescribed a breathing machine with Albuterol for her lungs, two-thirds of which have deteriorated.

"The doctors get mad at us for not following their treatment plan, but there's no electricity available under a bridge," said Dory.

During the year that they lived in their apartment, they hosted about 12 unhoused individuals for a week to a month at a time. They would be happy to do help others out again, given the opportunity. Scott estimates that between 80 and 90 percent of the former campers are back on the street. Most of those who made it got permanent subsidies or are receiving social security payments.

Washtenaw Housing Alliance director Julie Steiner recalled that MAP offered a Job Club to campers and of the 12



Many miss the community dinners and Sunday meeting held at Camp Take Notice prior to the eviction.

who participated, five or six got jobs.

Another perspective on the one-year subsidies was offered by MAP executive director Jan Little. MAP is one of the area housing agencies that acted as intermediaries between the campers and the landlords. She noted that the subsidies funded only rent – which sometimes included utilities – not agency staff time.

"I think working with those one-year vouchers actually damaged our relationships with landlords. The supportive services weren't there and we were reactive instead of proactive," said Little. In addition to lots of turnover after only one year, there were incidents during the year and one tenant just abandoned the apartment mid-year.

Brian, a longtime Ann Arborite, was a foreman in a manufacturing plant for years. He moved on to managing pizza stores before suffering a heart attack in 2011 that left him exhausted and under doctor's orders to lose many of his 308 pounds. He shed 120 pounds and noted that, being homeless, he walks 10 to 15 miles a day which helps keep the weight off. His former energy level has not returned and he has found it challenging to return to the workforce as an older adult. Brian was denied SSI, despite the fact that he paid more than \$130,000 into the system during his working years. He had been sleeping on porches around town since his voucher expired but recently had to relocate to a tool shed.

The veterans who lived at the camp are faring better. With their VA housing subsidies, they can afford to rent rooms in a subdivided house where they still have some company. Many still attend the Sunday MISSION meetings, but find it more challenging to gather and share resources without a semi-permanent campsite. They also miss the alternative communal living situation

provided by CTN.

Steve lived at CTN three different times when he was between housing: once while he awaited insurance money after his house burned down, and another after he returned from a job in the Philippines. He happened to be there during the eviction and received a subsidy, which, for him, was a lucky windfall. He is leaving the Ypsilanti apartment he got from the subsidy and moving into a house, where he may reunite with his pregnant wife. He works as a roofer in the summer and plows snow in the winter. His two eldest daughters are studying at the University of Michigan.

Steve used to let people stay with him but stopped because they needed too much supervision. He misses some of the people from camp and being part of a supportive community.

Shawn recently renewed his lease on the apartment he got with his \$500 subsidy, which was permanent and did not expire after a year. The rest of the rent is paid with a third of his SSI check. He occasionally hosts friends overnight.

Mike, another camper with issues who received a permanent subsidy, said, "I don't know how it happened. I was only supposed to get a year-long voucher like everyone else." His subsidy is limited to \$730 per month for rent and utilities. This is on the light side for an apartment near a bus line, but his landlord was accommodating because of Mike's reputation as a good

guy who doesn't cause any trouble.

"I can't have anyone from Camp Take Notice staying with me. It was part of the agreement I made with the landlord, who usually doesn't accept vouchers," said Mike.

"There were no extras for food or transportation and they stuck us all in Ypsilanti. We were getting seven bus tokens a week from CTN," Mike continued.

Mike's SSI application is pending, but in the meantime he has started selling Groundcover News and collecting cans when the University of Michigan has a home football games. He was nearly stranded in Ann Arbor his first time out. It was an afternoon game, and he was so engrossed in gathering cans that he forgot to check the time until 6:05. The last bus for Ypsilanti leaves at 6 p.m. on Saturdays.

When he tried redeeming his cans, most of the stores in the area refused to take them, with a variety of excuses including that their redemption machines were temporarily malfunctioning. He was shown one of the "broken" machines – it needed to have its bag changed. He finally prevailed on one store owner to allow him to turn in seven dollars' worth of cans so he could call Night Ride and get back home.

Nearly all the former campers who were interviewed expressed a deep appreciation of CTN and longing for the community they shared.

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## My bowl – a February morning

by Elizabeth S. Kurtz, aka Lit  
Groundcover Vendor

Specs of phlegm dot the walkway onto the church where daily breakfast is served for the homeless. I spot one and upon a second encounter I am barely able to suppress my urge to gag. The cold frigid, February air is a foe to the lungs, and charges them with more exertion to survive than is somehow natural. Soon I am sitting across the table from two men who may have just released the sputum and are now beginning to consume a bowl of oatmeal or grits. I look at my own bowl of oatmeal with cinnamon and raisins and dig into the sweetness the mixture has created. There is a syrupy sensation on my tongue and the flavor of chewy raisins produces its own taste experience.



This is a flavor that I have come to enjoy more and more over the course of several months – oatmeal being one of the only gems that has survived the turmoil I have encountered recently. I cling to my morning bowl of oatmeal with tenacity for my emotional and my physical survival. I have conversations with the volunteer servers about my

own oatmeal-cooking abilities as though I am discussing a long-lost friend that I have been separated from for too long. I describe the cooking process in detail: the slow heating of the water on the stovetop that gradually becomes a raging boil; the texture of the steel-cut oats; the twenty-some minutes of simmering that allows me to organize and gather my thoughts like flowers from a wild imaginary field that will present me a bouquet of focus at my table as I eat them slowly and plan my day.

Then, as now, my bowl of oatmeal is my private sanctuary that brings order, peace and calmness to me during an otherwise unpredictable existence. Despite this, I charge into the church late most mornings, savoring and

dreading the fleeting moments that determine if I am still in time for that bowl. Most people have already finished their breakfasts and are quietly annoyed at my lack of promptness. I am annoyed at myself as well, since I know that my oatmeal bowl helps sustain my spiritual equilibrium.

I request my own special bowl type, a variety of bowl that reminds me of the style of dishes I served from my own table. I pull up a seat at the communal breakfast table and take time to catch up on chitchat with members of my new community, or plan for musical interludes after breakfast. Although I have overstayed my time and am soon whisked away with the others, my bowl of oatmeal has given me the power and confidence that I need to start the uncertain day.

## Getting squeezed by sequestration – not so smart after all

by Martin Stolzenberg  
Groundcover Contributor

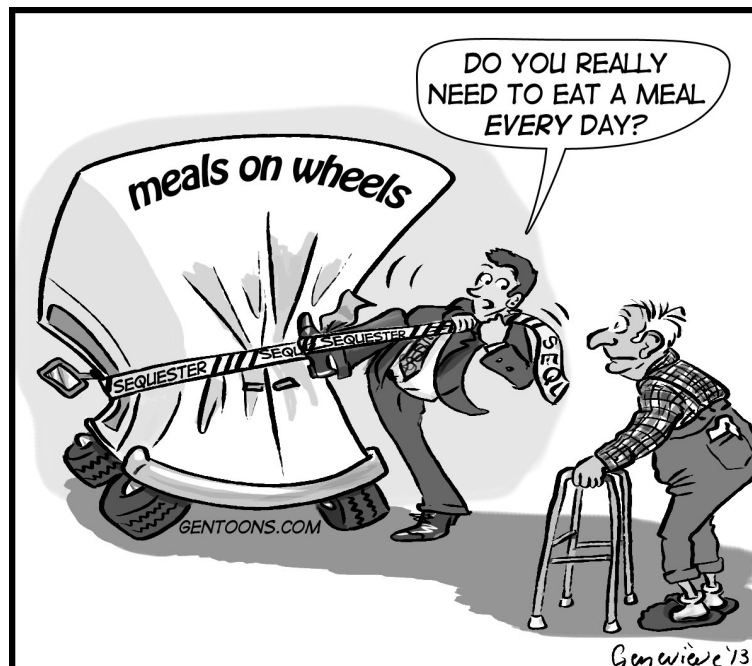
The Webster's Dictionary definition of *sequester* is "to remove, lay aside or separate." *Sequestration* is "the act of seclusion or separation." Doesn't sound awful, but in the hands of the U.S. Congress it has created a mess. Budget sequestration has come to mean automatic spending cuts in Federal government spending.

Here is some table-setting to describe this complex situation.

Sequestration came about because the Congress and the White House were in dispute about the federal deficit. Nothing new about that – deficit spending has been going on forever, back to our Founding Fathers. Alexander Hamilton was pressured to reduce the debt in the 1780s and Thomas Jefferson lamented about the mounting national debt. Deficit spending, then and now, means that Congress allows the Federal government to spend more in a given year than it takes in through taxes. In fact, in only a handful of years has our budget been balanced; that is, when spending did not exceed tax income.

You might say, *Hold on. I mostly don't spend more than my income. Why can't the government do that?*

It's not the same. The government can print more money to cover any deficit. By the way, covering the deficit is not payment against future spending, it is for debts we have already incurred. Therefore, the threat of not extending the debt limit is likened to not wanting to pay for a suit or dress you bought and took home. Some deficit spending by government is good, but too much is a problem. That's what bothers the



Republicans now. Of course it didn't bother as many of them when the deficits were being run up in the Family Bush presidencies.

During that time, the always-likable Vice-President Dick Cheney said, "Deficits don't matter."

That was then, and this is now. Tax cuts, war spending, a recession, a financial crisis and tepid economic growth have, in recent years, accelerated the federal debt. In 2011, the two parties couldn't agree on authorizing the swelling budget – imagine that. So they decided, at the behest of the Obama administration, to pass the Budget Control Act of 2011. This, in turn, created a Deficit Reduction Committee to produce legislation that would decrease the deficit by \$1.2 trillion over 10 years. In case the two parties couldn't agree on where the cuts would come from, a poison pill would be triggered to force them to achieve a

compromise on the budget. The logic was that neither party would be willing to swallow the poison pill. They would then agree on a budget they both could live with.

The compromise never happened. In effect, both parties chose to damage themselves rather than budge on their respective positions.

It is like the story of the scorpion and the elephant. Both wished to cross a swollen, dangerous river.

The scorpion said, *I know where to go in order to cross safely, but am too small to do it by myself.*

The elephant said, *I am tall enough to navigate the water in the right spot, but don't know where that spot is.*

The scorpion suggested, *Let me climb on your back; I will direct you and we will both safely cross the river.*

The concerned elephant thought about it and said, *How do I know you won't fatally sting me?*

*That would be ridiculous, if I did that we both would die.*

see POOR HURT, page 9

  
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# Partners for Transit: improving public transportation in Washtenaw County

by Melissa Golden, Groundcover Contributor  
and Shelley DeNeve, Groundcover Vendor

If people are the life and blood of Washtenaw County, public transportation serves as the heart and veins that pump us through the body. For many, public transportation provides a connection to nearby cities, work and vital services.

Washtenaw Partners for Transit (P4T) is a coalition of leaders in the community seeking to improve and expand public transportation in Washtenaw County. Their current goals focus on the highly populated "urban core," which includes over 220,000 residents. They wish to improve the quality of public transit by increasing frequency, expanding coverage, extending hours, and providing express routes.

Currently, local officials are working on a transit plan for Washtenaw County's urban core. Over the next month or so, the Ann Arbor City Council, P4T, the Ann Arbor Transportation Authority (AATA), and other local organizations will be hosting events to discuss the future of public transportation in the area.



Groundcover vendor Shelley is one of many in our community who benefit from AATA services.

Improved public transit to this urban core offers many benefits for Washtenaw County. It promotes economic development – for example, every 10 jobs created in the public transit sector results in six additional jobs generated elsewhere. Additionally, every dollar communities invest in public transit generates approximately four dollars in economic returns. It helps urban businesses fill their low-wage jobs with employees who cannot afford to live in the city. Public

transportation helps families save money, too – households that are likely to use public transportation save, on average, over \$9,000 each year.

Improving public transportation also helps protect the environment and strengthen the community. P4T's vision of expanded public transit in Washtenaw County would save an estimated 3,600 metric tons of carbon dioxide emissions annually, reduce traffic congestion and parking spaces needed, and save people millions of hours of travel time.

Equally important, public transportation helps the individual. Whether it facilitates access to a job, or

helps senior citizens and those with disabilities maintain their independence, public transportation benefits everyone in some way.

Shelley DeNeve – Groundcover vendor, writer, and vendor representative board member – shared how public transportation has affected her life and offered her observations from one of the preliminary P4T meetings.

"Since my involvement with Groundcover News," Shelley said, "I have utilized the bus system more than I ever had before in my life. I can probably count on one hand the times I used the bus growing up here in Ann Arbor. I was kind of scared to use it for fear I would get on the wrong bus and end up somewhere I didn't need to be.

"When I used the bus in recent years, I felt that it was a hassle because I had to plan my excursions ahead of time and allow extra time to get to and from bus stops. I also found that using the bus on the weekends was challenging. Some days when using the bus, I felt like I was on the bus all day. Now, it's just another everyday thing in my life.

"I really started using the bus system because both my husband at the time and I were unemployed. Our family took a hit economically, obviously. I did find a part time job downtown in January of 2011. I still work there, and my employer participates in the Go!Pass program with the AATA bus system, so I get to ride the bus for free.

see EXPERIENCE, page 11

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## Shaping Ypsilanti with a form-based master plan

by Leonore Gerstein  
Groundcover Contributor

In a way, cities are like people. Both individuals and communities undergo changes, some inevitable, others unforeseen, and both move ahead with the help of self-analysis and goal-setting. As it takes stock, a city might pose questions much like our own: "Do our actions still match the values we set as guideposts? Were our plans workable? We have changed, and so, what do we need to do differently now? What comes first?"

The City of Ypsilanti's 18-month-long active exploration has concluded with a far-reaching new Master Plan. From this plan will flow zoning regulations guided by an innovative set of tools and values. The Master Plan replaces one created when President Clinton was in office. Some details were changed since then, but the tinkering of recent years has resulted in an unwieldy patchwork of zoning regulations that no longer serves the city well.

Thanks to a 2012 HUD grant, itself part of a larger county-wide grant called ReImagine Washtenaw, Ypsilanti has been able to create in a democratic and people-oriented way, their new Master Plan called Shape Ypsi. The planning

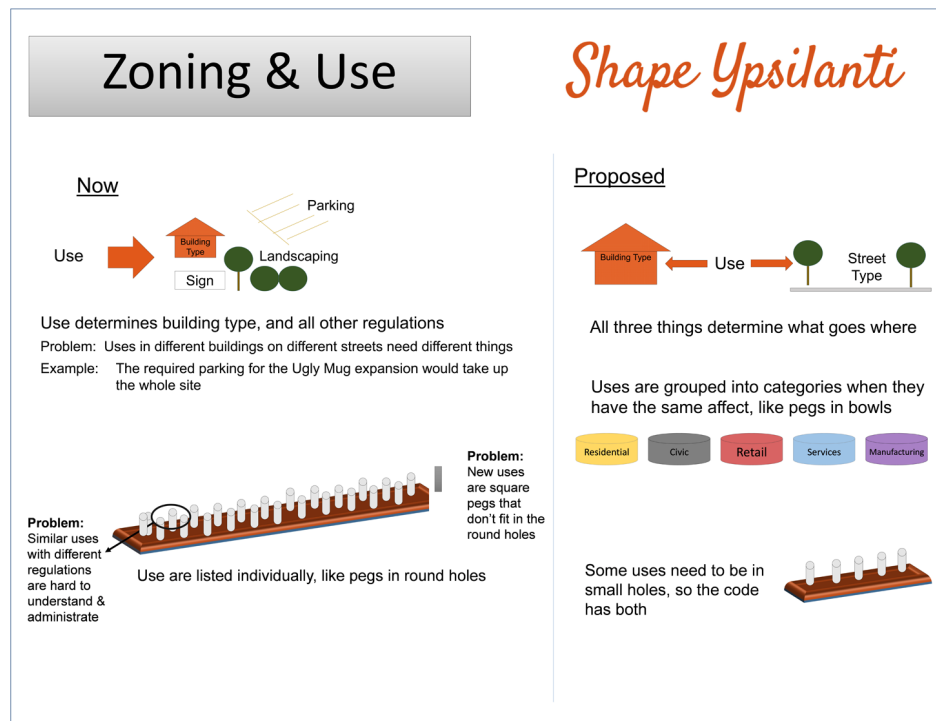


Illustration of the difference between old-fashioned and form-based zoning. Reproduced with the permission of ENP & Assoc.

team created the website [shapeypsi.com](http://shapeypsi.com), and a corresponding Facebook page. These portals provide fresh information about planning progress and serve as a forum for comments and questions from the public.

ShapeYpsi made it clear that citizen participation was welcomed as an essential element in the planning

process. To that end, Ypsilanti's planning office, the urban planning consultants, and the volunteer Ypsilanti Planning Commission designed creative activities open to all residents, through numerous facilitated gatherings and online social media. Three-hundred individuals participated in various organized activities, and roughly 2,000 voiced their views by posting on social media or on the ShapeYpsi website.

Ypsilanti has chosen to be guided by an innovative planning approach, called "form-based planning" or "form-based code." What is meant by "form" in this context is something akin to a hybrid of urban and human ecologies. It is grounded in an empowering and positive outlook; everything good about the city becomes a social and architectural scaffolding for future

changes. People's visions of their community are incorporated into the plan. No new building project is viewed in isolation, or without considering the assets in the existing urban environment, be it a street, corridor, neighborhood or district. To the left is an illustration of the difference between a old-fashioned zoning and form-based plans.

The 18-month-long participatory process began with focus groups and brainstorming sessions that captured the vision Ypsilanti residents have for their city. From this came the formulation of 10 Guiding Values, which all future planning decisions must reflect. One value states that, "Anyone, no matter what age or income, can find a place to call home in Ypsilanti." Another value states, "Everyone in the region knows Ypsilanti has great things to do in great places that are in great shape." When integrated, all of the values fell under three overarching principles: "Safety comes first; Diversity is our strength; Ypsilanti is sustainable."

People gathered in small groups and toured several neighborhoods, exchanging views among themselves and with the professionals writing the Master Plan. There were charrettes – what we usually call workshops and studios – during which people contributed their views to the each phase of the plan. In one activity, called a Discover Charrette, participants were asked what they wanted to *preserve*, *change*, or *create* in their city. Writing on sticky notes, they applied these three options to the long list of ideas and observations that came up in earlier discussions.

see WALKING TOURS, page 9

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9		3			2	8	7	
6				7	4			9
4						3		6
			7				8	
			8		6			
	6				9			
2		1						7
7			4	1				8
	8	6	2			9		1

Fill in the squares so that each row, column, and 3-by-3 box contain the numbers 1 through 9.

## Cryptoquote

YX SRC VMFQV HF QB YX Y OFMF  
 ODQV Y RCADV VR EF QKJ IRCNJ  
 EF, Y OYNN EFIRHF ODQV Y  
 RCADV VR EF QKJ IRCNJ EF.  
 — ZRDQKK ORNXAQA PRK ARFVDF

Hint: Ⓟ=V

## Solutions on page 11

## Groundcover Vendor Code

While Groundcover is a non-profit, and paper vendors are considered contracted self-employers, we still have expectations of how vendors should conduct themselves while selling and representing the paper.

The following list is our Vendor Code of Conduct, which every vendor reads and signs before receiving a badge and papers. We request that if you discover a vendor violating any tenets of the Code, please contact us and provide as many details as possible. Our paper and our vendors should be positively impacting our County.

**All vendors must agree to the following code of conduct:**

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- I will only sell current issues of Groundcover.
- I agree not to sell additional goods or products when selling the paper or to panhandle, including panhandling with only one paper.
- I will wear and display my badge when selling papers.
- I will only purchase the paper from Groundcover Staff and will not sell to or buy papers from other Groundcover vendors, especially vendors who have been suspended or terminated.

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### ACROSS

- European capital
- Desert plants
- \_\_\_\_\_ Heights, Antarctica
- Above
- Synthetic fabric
- Encourage
- Low value security
- Tenth century Armenian king
- Howards \_\_\_\_\_, 1992 movie
- Musical composition
- Unruly ones
- Bando and Mineo
- \_\_\_\_\_ Swope, 1969 movie
- Guard
- Box
- Hypothetical dark matter particle
- Promontory
- Start over
- Mispronunciation
- Liquor
- Fastener
- Director Preminger
- Simplicity
- Outdoor game
- Aeries
- TV journalist Dan
- Autocrat
- Olympic event
- Marshland plants
- Trickery
- Tennis player Sunitha
- Against (prefix)
- Canadian rock band
- Newspaper article
- Lazybones
- ¼ of the sky, when measuring cloud cover
- Moniker
- Lentils
- Unavailable

### DOWN

- 1948 Hitchcock thriller
- Baker's need
- Repair
- Bird
- Expensive
- Seventeenth century sculptor Quellinus
- Simpleton
- River in Italy
- Marking fluid
- Musical symbol
- Metropolitan
- Chalcedony quartz
- Disorganized
- Hanker
- Conjunction
- Brake hard
- Sheet
- Minnesota township
- Egress
- Successor to the National Bureau of Standards (abbr.)
- Annoyed
- Demolish
- Paint layer
- Every
- Gaming cubes
- Composer and Emmy winner Kim

### Pocket Change

1	2	3	4		5	6	7	8	9		10	11	12	13
14					15						16			
17					18						19			
20					21						22			
				23						24				
25	26	27					28	29						
30						31					32	33	34	35
36					37						38			
39					40					41				
				42	43					44				
45	46	47						48						
49						50	51					52	53	54
55					56						57			
58					59						60			
61					62						63			

- \_\_\_\_\_ Buy, national retailer
- Bakery purchase
- Typographer's measures
- Straightedges
- Teach
- Busybody
- Desert shrub
- Compare
- Nobel Prize winner André
- California university (abbr.)
- Japanese pottery
- Play components
- Affirmative
- Pen part
- Shilling (slang)

Puzzle by Jeff Richmond



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(If you are going to the game, park here and help support our youth program)

November 28 and 29

Office and building closed for Thanksgiving

an invitation to grow in spirit and serve with joy



## Walking tours highly beneficial

continued from page 7

Here are some examples of the items on that list:

**“Preserve”:** community gardens, farmer markets, the hometown feel, good code enforcement.

**“Change”:** alter Michigan Avenue – make it easier to ride your bike, improve sidewalks, redo the Water Street area (slated for major urban renewal), allow the construction of hoop houses (for gardening) on empty lots.

**“Create”:** a train station in Depot Town for the future commuter train, new signage and wayfinding displays to help people get around town; ordinances that allow easier residential food production; a full-service grocery store (the latter cannot be mandated by the plan).

People taking part in implementation focus groups were asked to recommend a time frame for over 50 actions written into the Master Plan Draft. Most recently, people were invited to join in another walk around a neighborhood. With one of the consultants as guide, people saw examples of items in the new Master Plan that will become a reality in the city’s new zoning code.

Special meetings were held with numerous stakeholders, such as realtors.

When asked what he found most remarkable about the various activities, planning commissioner Richard Murphy told me, “Personally, I found the walking tours to be of high benefit, especially where they resulted in people interacting with others they wouldn’t have normally, or where they allowed people glimpses into neighborhoods or community institutions outside their own.”

And what could have gone better? Despite all efforts, not all segments of Ypsilanti’s population were equally represented in the activities.

Still, Commissioner Murphy and everyone this reporter met at activities were filled with enthusiasm for the many opportunities the new plan and future code will provide Ypsilanti. The website, [shapeypsi.com](http://shapeypsi.com), is still active, so take a look. A copy of the Master Plan is available at the downtown branch of the Ypsilanti District Library. Give it a read and learn a lot about Ypsilanti’s present and promise.

*Three cheers for Ypsilanti!*

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## Poor hurt most by sequester

continued from page 5

*You’re right. Let’s do it.*

With that, the elephant used his trunk to perch the scorpion on his back. Halfway across the river, the scorpion stung the elephant.

With his dying breath the elephant asked, *Why did you do that? Now both of us will die.*

The drowning scorpion gurgled, *I know, but it’s my nature; I couldn’t help it.*

That is the way it is with our Congressional leaders. Both scorpion-like parties swallowed the poison pill and failed to reach an agreement on the budget and extend the debt limit. So the sequester took effect in March 2013. Spending cuts automatically occurred equally in defense expenditures (an area that the Republicans love) and non-defense, discrepancy spending (near and dear to the Democrats). Worst of all, this sequestration period isn’t for just one year. It goes on for the next 10 years.

President Obama is often referred to as “the smartest man in the room – whatever room he is in.”

He and the Democrats thought that, in negotiating the sequester, they had saved the programs dearest to them – Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid – from cuts, so they were in great shape. Somehow, the President and his associates must have failed to notice that the expenditures for defense were already so bloated (we spend as much as the next 16 countries combined) that a cut of about 10 percent or \$45 billion a year in defense spending was chicken feed. The Republican bean counters knew it, and that is why they agreed to take the poison pill.

From the Democrats’ perspective, entitlement programs that benefit the neediest among us have been continually hammered down. Now further chunks are being taken away by the sequester. Such programs as unemployment benefits, Meals on Wheels, Head Start, the Supplementary Feeding Program for Women, Infants and Children, Low Income Home Energy Assistance, and federal funding for schools on Indian reservations and near low-income housing have taken sequester hits. Agencies that fund research and development projects are also suffering budget cuts.


Economists are already claiming that the sequestration is damaging job growth and the economy. In other words, it is making a bad problem worse. What a disaster – and there is no end in sight. Despite the sequestration both parties couldn’t agree on a new budget going forward in 2014. So the Republicans shut down the government, gained no advantages and caused an estimated \$24 billion hole in the economy. While there was discussion about eliminating the sequester, something both parties desire at this point, it didn’t go away.

Now that the dust has settled, who is going to be hurt the most by all of this?

In the musical *Man of la Mancha*, the errant knight’s squire Sancho Panza says, “Whether the stone hits the pitcher, or the pitcher hit the stone, it’s going to be bad for the pitcher.”

Unfortunately, those among us at the bottom rungs of the economic ladder are The Pitcher and the Congress of the United States is The Stone.

And sometimes, the smartest man in the room gets too smart for his own good.



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## KICKED OUT: ILLUSTRATING THE INVISIBLE COMMUNITY

Edited by Sassafra Lowrey  
c. 2010 by Homofactus Press

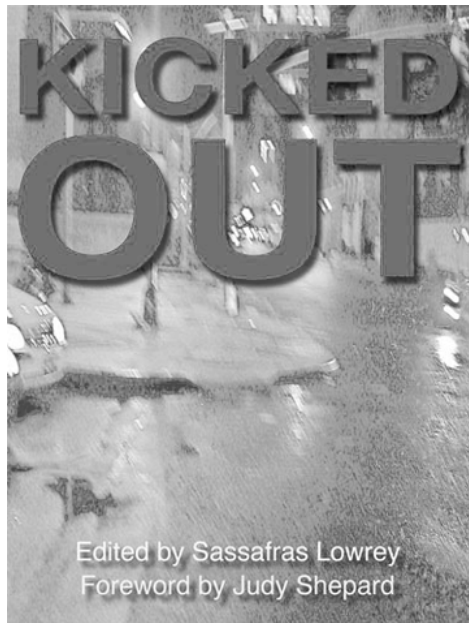
Review by Francesca Lupia  
Groundcover Contributor

"The streets steal stories," declares editor Sassafra Lowrey in the introduction to Homofactus Press's anthology *Kicked Out*, but the diverse collection of narratives and essays does a gut-wrenching job of returning pilfered perspectives to the public eye.

In his essay, "Dumpster Diving, Gay Skinheads, Boredom and Violence: Pestilential Adventures on the Streets of California," transgendered Tenzin describes the fractured but fiercely-devoted relationship of his street "family" with vibrant, raw-edged richness: "I remember my friends as if we were war buddies. While normal kids played with Barbies, we shared accounts of being threatened with murder... We donned elaborate disguises designed to repel and intimidate like vibrantly spiky, poisonous caterpillars."

In "Running to Stand Still," lesbian Sabine Tigerlily Vasco's stark prose brings forth a painfully believable picture of a mother clawing desperately at her daughter's loyalty with ignorance and abuse.

Three chapters later, "the hayop ka! chronicles: a queer pin@y OUTcasted and in the streets" by Kay Ulanday Barrett articulates the volume's importance: "we were all invisible somehow but blessed with different



ways to cope."

*Kicked Out* is a book by – and for – an invisible population. It's hard to imagine that hundreds of thousands of voices (as many as 40 percent of homeless youth in this country) could pass unnoticed, especially when their owners face harassment, discrimination, and abuse on a daily basis. But the silencing effect of stigma and poverty on the book's target audience and authors – the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, questioning, and asexual youth who have become homeless as a result of their sexual orientation or gender identity – is achingly severe.

Homeless voices of any age and orientation are often drowned out by public perception of the housing-insecure as lazy, drug-addicted, or

mentally ill. Homeless LGBTQ teens, though, face even more devastating hardship than their adult contemporaries. As Gwyn Hulswit of Homofactus Press explains, these youth are "not runaways, but thrown away." "Kicked-out" youth lose access to their friends and mentors, to opportunities for education and employment, and to the emotional and financial support vital for a healthy adolescence. Queer youth, many of whom have already suffered lifelong victimization, face physical and sexual harassment, denial of access to shelters and resource centers, and the mixed indifference and bigotry of a trans- and homophobic culture.

*Kicked Out*, which rejects the label of "annoying self-help book" in its introductory message to homeless teen readers, defies easy characterization. It's a collection of resources, a roster of grave statistics concerning teen homelessness, and a smart selection of articles detailing current policies and programs to protect kicked-out youth. It's an anthology of interviews, relentless streams of prose, and spoken-word-style poetry that swings between continents and launches sharply genuine portraits of family and betrayal into the reader's contemplation. Some writers' precarious personal situations prevented them from meeting more than once with the anthology's editors; each characterization was, in Hulswit's words "treated as if it was the only time we'd hear this young person's voice." One young woman's memoir was communicated entirely through text messaging; the preservation of her original grammar and spelling adds an additional level of painful realism.

There are plenty of factual essays here to be studied and explored as well, and the policy-based perspective that these agency profiles and summaries of political action bring to the book is valuable. Juxtaposed with the vivid narratives of youth and shelter workers, though, the volume's more academic chapters sometimes seem out-of-place and overly dry. The book's organization starts strong, following, for instance, a queer teen's portrait of her biological family with a profile of an agency that assigns foster families to kicked-out teens. In places, though, the slow buildup of voice and urgent narrative developed in

consecutive stories seems jarringly interrupted by informative pieces.

Occasional and minor flow issues, however, do little to detract from the anthology's emotional punch. The book's focus stays, as it should, on its life-giving element: the interaction of individual youth with intolerant culture, whether contained within the walls of a conservative Southern Italian household or manifested in the form of physical violence between homeless gangs of "punks" and skinheads.

The brutal facts of queer teen homelessness are tragic, and it's easy to enter into the book expecting ugly bleakness. Many stories are, of course, violent and soul-gutting, but the fresh singularity of each voice keeps the book determined and alive. The personal reflections of youth and their allies, spoken in poetry and text messages, are diverse and ring mercilessly true. *Kicked Out* isn't an easy read, but it's compelling and, ultimately, hopeful enough to make it hard to put down. In Lowrey's words, it's an attempt to "create larger conversations around the issue – more importantly, to put a face on this epidemic." One collection of articles and verses, of course, isn't enough to give sufficient voice to a silent and ignored demographic, but this imperfect anthology steals back enough stories from the robber streets to demand interest and action.

Contact your local library or favorite locally-owned bookstore to inquire about obtaining a copy, or visit the *Kicked Out* official website to order the book (hard-copy or e-book) online: [kickedoutanthology.com](http://kickedoutanthology.com)



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## Local book publisher gives voice to society's unheard and ignored

by Greg Hoffman  
Groundcover News Sales Manager

*"Complex Books for complex people."*

This slogan accurately describes the publications of Homofactus Press, a local, independent book-publishing firm founded by Jay Sennett and Gwyn Hulswit in 2006. Homofactus Press (HFP) uses on-demand printing to publish its titles, unlike traditional publishers' fixed-quantity printing. With on-demand printing, a small publisher can order the precise number of copies of their titles as needed, without having to worry about having dozens or hundreds of unsold books. The production cost per book is slightly higher, but reduced upfront costs open the door for small publishers and authors, particularly those like HFP that are exploring highly progressive social issues.

Originally founded as a "trans publishing firm," Homofactus Press's early titles were focused on female-to-male transsexual topics. In time, the titles and anthologies that were submitted to Homofactus Press grew in variety. Co-founder Jay Sennett describes one of the key themes



underlying HFP as "a medium for the writers and readers that don't fit into the normal check boxes."

HFP's titles explore topics that are virtually unrepresented in mainstream discussion, often as a result of much of society's general discomfort regarding intersecting or underrepresented social identities. Among the eight titles that Homofactus Press has published thus far, topics include teen homelessness, gender identity, defining masculinity through trans and feminist perspectives, and the intersections of disability and sexuality.

Perhaps the most successful title published by Homofactus Press so far, *Kicked Out*, is an anthology of personal stories from youth who have been kicked out of their homes by their families because these youth identify on

the LGBTQ Spectrum. Edited by Sassafras Lowrey, the book was released in 2010 and was a 2011 finalist for the Lambda Literary Award for LGBT Anthology of the Year. At the time Lowrey conceived the idea, there were many books for LGBTQ youth that provided advice about coming out, but virtually no books available for what happens after coming out – particularly rejection by one's family – and that was the driving force behind the anthology.

The publication of *Kicked Out*, along with the continuing work of Lowrey, HFP and service providers such as Ozone House, led to the creation of ongoing programs, such as the Kicked Out Fund.

"The goal behind the fund is to work in collaboration with direct service agencies to raise awareness about the epidemic of LGBTQ youth homelessness, and as a fundraising tool for participating organizations," states the book's official website, [kickedoutanthology.com](http://kickedoutanthology.com).

More than three years after its publication, *Kicked Out* is still a popular a tool to springboard dialogue about the growing problem of kicked-out

youth, as was the focus of a recent forum at Ann Arbor's SafeHouse Center on October 22, 2013. Panelists Gwyn Hulswit (HFP/SafeHouse), Jerry Peterson (the Ruth Ellis Center in Detroit), and Katie Doyle (Ozone House) spoke about *Kicked Out* and its growing relevance in so many communities. The panelists remarked that an estimated 40 percent of homeless youth identify as LGBTQ; combined with an increase in youth coming out at younger ages, the social supports for LGBTQ youth and real strategies for promoting family acceptance have become increasingly imperative.

Homofactus Press titles can be purchased by visiting HFP's website [homofactuspress.com](http://homofactuspress.com). Their books can also be purchased or ordered from Common Language Bookstore located on Braun Court in Kerrytown or from Literati Bookstore on E. Washington St. in Ann Arbor. For more information about the Kicked Out Fund, visit [kickedoutanthology.com](http://kickedoutanthology.com) or [ozonehouse.org/give/kickedout.php](http://ozonehouse.org/give/kickedout.php).

## Personal experience with buses informs opinion

continued from page 6

"I did acquire a vehicle in June of 2013, but I still use the bus system to save on gas and parking. I sometimes drive my car halfway to downtown and park it on a side street to take the bus the rest of the way into downtown to work. I do this in case I have business to take care of before or after work. There were a couple periods in my life in the last eight years where I didn't have a vehicle, and I was even more grateful we have a great bus system in this city.

"I believe that we should do some expansion into the outer city limits as well as increasing public transportation availability on weekends, such as

extending hours into late evenings on weekends, and expanding into other adjacent communities such as Saline, Dexter, Ypsilanti Township and Pittsfield Township. This expansion would be a win-win, as bus riders would save on gas and mileage and contribute to decreasing emissions. People without their own vehicles can pursue job opportunities they may not have had prior to bus service. I also believe if we can expand into other communities, just about everyone would benefit just getting their 'things to do' lists accomplished.

"I went to a meeting about this P4T expansion project. I heard that there were people opposed to the expansion

because they did not want the risk of bringing less desirable individuals into the Ann Arbor community. Although there may be some truth to that, we still need to look at the big picture, which is enriching the lives of all who use the bus system, attracting new bus riders and saving ecologically and economically.

"I challenge people who don't take the bus simply because they don't think they have to, or people who don't take the bus because they feel they are better than people who use the bus to try it – it's not that bad; it's actually fairly pleasant. I also leave you with this thought: don't laugh or make fun of people who take the bus. You never

know when you may be put into a situation where you will have to use it, not by choice. I was one of those people who made fun and now I'm using it."

It is vital that individuals like Shelley speak up about their experiences with public transportation. Martha Valadez, a P4T campaign organizer, said, "Improvements don't happen unless folks get involved. People need to be organized and connected so that changes happen to their benefit and with their say."

The P4T website, [partnersfortransit.org](http://partnersfortransit.org), describes some ways individuals can get involved in the effort to improve public transportation.

## Cryptoquote Solution

If you treat me as if I were what I ought to be and could be, I will become what I ought to be and could be.

– Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

9	5	3	1	6	2	8	7	4
6	2	8	3	7	4	1	5	9
4	1	7	9	8	5	3	2	6
5	3	9	7	4	1	6	8	2
1	7	2	8	3	6	4	9	5
8	6	4	5	2	9	7	1	3
2	4	1	6	9	8	5	3	7
7	9	5	4	1	3	2	6	8
3	8	6	2	5	7	9	4	1

R	O	M	E		C	A	C	T	I		Q	U	A	M
O	V	E	R		O	R	L	O	N		U	R	G	E
P	E	N	N	Y	S	T	O	C	K		A	B	A	S
E	N	D			E	T	U	D	E		B	R	A	T
				S	A	L	S				P	U	T	N
S	E	N	T	R	Y		C	R	A	T	E			
A	X	I	O	N		C	R	A	G		R	E	D	O
L	I	S	P		B	O	O	Z	E		N	A	I	L
O	T	T	O		E	A	S	E			B	O	C	C
				N	E	S	T	S			R	A	T	H
T	Y	R	A	N	T				L	U	G	E		
R	E	E	D	S		G	U	I	L	E		R	A	O
A	N	T	I		N	I	C	K	E	L	B	A	C	K
I	T	E	M		I	D	L	E	R		O	K	T	A
N	A	M	E		B	E	A	N	S		B	U	S	Y



## Mama's Stroganoff



by Lisa Sonnenburg

2 tbsp oil (more if necessary), or cooking spray  
 1 lb stewing beef  
 1 large or 2 small onions, chopped  
 4 fresh tomatoes, peeled and chopped, or 1 14-oz can of diced tomatoes  
 ¼ cup flour\*  
 1½ tsp salt  
 1 tbsp Worcestershire sauce  
 ¼ tsp black pepper  
 1 cup fresh small mushrooms, chopped, or 1 can of whole, sliced or pieces of mushrooms  
 1 cup sour cream\*  
 1 package egg noodles\*

### Directions:

Heat the oil or cooking spray in a deep skillet or any wide-bottom pan.

Add the stewing beef and brown on all sides.

Remove the beef and add the onions. Cook until soft.

Return beef to pan and add flour to coat.

Add tomatoes, salt, pepper and Worcestershire sauce.

Cook until tender (2-3 hours for maximum taste, but can be cut in half).

Add mushrooms and cook for another 10-15 minutes. While mushrooms are cooking, prepare egg noodles according to package directions.

Add sour cream to beef and heat gently until cooked through. DO NOT BOIL (sour cream will curdle).

Ladle stroganoff over noodles and enjoy!

### Special crock pot / slow-cooker directions:

Brown beef and onions (first 3 steps above).

Add tomatoes and seasonings.

After cooking, add equal parts flour and water and stir until smooth.

Follow last 3 steps above.

\* Those with dairy/gluten allergies can use gluten-free flour and noodles and non-dairy sour cream.

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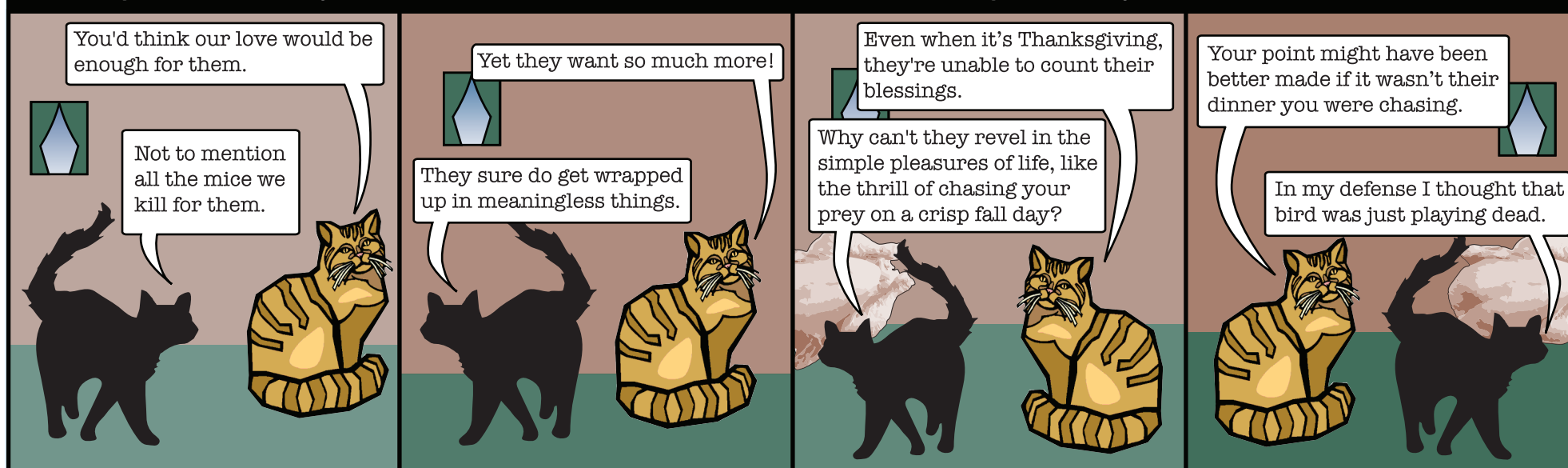
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